

E 422

.D63

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



00005027706

A Great Man fallen, in Israel:

THE SERMON,

IN ST. MARY'S CHURCH, BURLINGTON,

ON THE SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY, M DCCC L ;

THE NEXT AFTER THE DEATH,

OF

ZACHARY TAYLOR,

PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES:

BY

THE RIGHT REV. GEORGE WASHINGTON DOANE, D.D., LL.D.,

BISHOP OF NEW JERSEY,

PRESIDENT OF BURLINGTON COLLEGE.

Burlington:

AT THE MISSIONARY PRESS.

1850.

Burlington College, July 10th, 1850.

DEAR FATHER,—Though separated from the arena of political strife, we cannot but mourn our great loss, in the removal, from the Executive Chair, of so wise a head, so noble a heart, and so strong an arm, as that of President Taylor.

Feeling, that his example portrayed to us, and to our countrymen, by you, would be a just tribute to his mighty memory, and an impressive theme for our instruction, we come to you, as loving children, to a Father; asking you to comfort our hearts, by an expression of our grief, at the death of so great, so good, and so wise a man; so worthy to be a successor of the Father and Founder of our glorious Union.

Ever most faithfully, and fondly your children,

(Signed by all the Students.)

The Rt. Rev. the President of the College.

A SERMON.

KNOW YE NOT, THAT THERE IS A PRINCE, AND A GREAT MAN,
FALLEN, THIS DAY, IN ISRAEL?

2 SAMUEL, iii. 33.

In these expressive words, did the great heart of royal David pay its tribute, to the valiant Abner, slain by the treachery of Joab. There are few minds, familiar with the Holy Scriptures, into which, they have not sprung, as the unbidden comment, on that astounding providence, which has stilled the pulses of the nation; and, to-day, twines every altar, in the land, with the funereal cypress. “Know ye not”—men say, to one another, as the lightning record flashes, through the land. “THE PRESIDENT IS DEAD!”—“know ye not, that there is a prince, and a great man, fallen, this day, in Israel?”

Death is the “touch of nature,” which, pre-eminently “makes the world, all kin.” God did not make it. It came in, with sin. Yet, we may say, and, still, be reverent, that, without it, as men have been, since the Fall, He could not live, in His own world. It is the one thing, at which nature quails. The fear of it sways the tumultuous Titan throngs, that, else, would scale the Heavens. And the damp chill, from its black wing, as it sweeps through the land, when pestilence falls on it, like a frost; or when, beside us, but a neighbour dies, is the reminder of our own mortality, and the conviction of His dread omnipotence.

Strange as it is, the snake’s old sneer, “Ye shall not surely die,” still haunts the human heart. We constantly

forget, that, when we clasp the loved one, to our heart, we clasp a skeleton. Age, talents, valour, virtue, rank, pre-eminence, in every age, and every where, deck out, for men, their idols. We come to think, that greatness cannot die. We marvel, that the bolt should strike the tallest tree. And, when the pastor falls, as that meek saint,* who fed, for forty years, the little flock, that, then, was tended here; or the physician dies, as that old man,† rare in his virtues, as his skill, who, to three generations, plied the healing art, among you, welcome to every hearth, men look, with mute amazement, on each other; and the country startles, that a mortal should have died!

But, chiefly, is the power of this instinctive superstition shown, when death strikes down the princes, among men. Republicans intuitively feel, that some divinity doth “hedge about a king.” Who did not feel a shudder crawl across his heart, when that young princess, on whom the hopes of England hung, all clustered, sank, with her infant, in a grave, which seemed, to all, untimely? When, lately, the meek widow of a king passed, from the exercise of all the charities of life, into the royal tomb, at Windsor, there were everywhere among us, the tokens of a sympathy, which touched the heart. And, when, nine years ago, our warrior President was borne, in one brief month, from the high homestead of the nation, to the sepulchre, beside the clear Potomac, what wave, in the broad sea, of our whole vast Republic, that was not stirred and tost, as when a water-spout is rent in sunder? “Know ye not”—was then, as

*The Rev. Dr. Wharton, Rector of St. Mary's Church, who died in 1833.

†Dr. Nathan W. Cole, who died, in 1843.

now, the instinctive, universal, utterance of the nation's startled heart—"know ye not, that there is a prince, and a great man, fallen, this day, in Israel?"

The worshipping assemblies, of twenty millions, are in harmony, with us, to-day. From one end, to the other, of our broad land, the electric spark has flashed its fearful message, of the nation's loss: till North and South, and East and West, are bending, now, with us, over the new made grave; in which, the soldier of three wars, the conqueror in all, the patriot hero, the people's President, rests, from his honors, and his arms. As, when the Egyptians came, with Joseph's corpse, up to the threshing floor of Atad, it is "a great, and very sore, lamentation." And, it may well be so. For, in the graphic words of David, a man, a great man, and a prince, has "fallen this day, in Israel."

A man has fallen. I do not mean, a mere, male, human, individual. One, whom the tailor, rather than the mantua-maker, clothes. A walking thing, that wears a hat. I speak of that, which God meant, when He said, "Let us make man, in our image, after our likeness." Marred, sadly, now, by the concussion of that fearful Fall. But, capable of restoration, through the Cross. And, justifying well, in the renewal of its fair proportions, and its countenance erect, the sacred record, "God hath made man upright." A man, that has a mind; and uses it. A man, that has a heart; and yields to it. A man, that shapes his circumstances. A man, that cares not for himself. A man, with the simplicity of a child. A man, with the directness of a child. A man, with the freshness and earnestness of a child. A man, in justice. A man, in generosity. A man, in mag-

nanimity. A man, to meet emergencies. A man, to make occasions. A man, to dare, not only ; but to bear. A man, of love. A man, without a fear. A thunderbolt, in war. A dew drop, in the day of peace. One, that, against the fearful odds, of five to one, could sway the battle-storm, at Buena Vista. And, then, from the very arms and lap of victory, write to one,* whose gallant son had died, to make its crown, “when I miss his familiar face, I can say, with truth, that I feel no exultation, in our success.” Truly, a man, has “fallen, in Israel.”

And “*a great man*” *has fallen*. A great man, first, must be a man. And, then, must find, or make, the occasion, to be great. In every man, that *is* a man, there is, potentially, a great man. He, who has “fallen, this day, in Israel,” was great, in act. His masterly defence of Fort Harrison, when but a captain, in the service, where the terrors of impending conflagration, were added to the midnight onslaught of the Indians ; his successful conduct of the war, in Florida, against the same subtle, tireless, unrelenting foe ; the gallant movement to Point Isabel, and back to the encampment at Fort Brown, atchieving Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma, as mere episodes, along the way ; the storming and complete possession of Monterey, where every street was barricaded, and every house-top bristled with musketry ; the crowning victory, against such fearful odds, at Buena Vista ; and, more than that, the clear, calm, quiet, unpretending, but indomitable, answer, to Santa Anna’s insolent demand, sustained by twenty thousand men—“Sir, in reply

*The Hon. Henry Clay.

to your note, of this date, summoning me to surrender my forces, at discretion, I beg leave to say, that I decline acceding to your request :'' these glorious, but now painful, reminiscences of the military career of him, beside whose grave, a nation weeps, assure us, that, in him, a great man, has been taken, from our Israel. And, more illustrious, even, than, in these, the greatness, that knew how to bear such victories ; the greatness, that preserved its equilibrium, in the storm of national applause, and universal admiration ; the greatness, that could see the proudest palm of human power, planted before it, within easiest reach, and not put forth a hand, to pluck it : the greatness, that submitted to be made the President of these United States, since so the people willed : the greatness, that went on to Washington, and took the chair of State, and filled it, with the simple dignity, that had directed, from a tent, the ordering of the battlefield ; the greatness of moderation ; the greatness of modesty ; the greatness of self-conquest and control : these do but wound our bleeding hearts, more deeply, while they swell them, with a fuller, higher, admiration of the real greatness, of the great man, who has gone from us, to-day.

And, in him, "*a prince*" *has fallen*. A prince, in place. The head, as the word simply means, of twenty millions of free people ; so constituted and declared, by their own choice and act. A prince, in rank. The equal, in his station, of the kings, and emperors, and potentates, of the whole world. A prince, in power. The President of the United States, legitimately authorized, and constitutionally sustained, in acts of influence, and ultimate authority, such as no sovereign of Europe has, by any other right, than that of mere brute force ; and the exponent of a political and mo-

ral sway, which, in its growing and pervading power, no mere brute force can cope with, or resist. And, in his exercise of these high functions, and discharge of their resulting duties, a prince, in quiet dignity ; a prince, in calm, indomitable resolution ; a prince, in utter disregard of consequences, when the right is seen, and done. The people's prince, in his unostentatious life. The people's prince, in his lamented death. "Know ye not,"—who does not know, who does not feel, who does not own, that it is so?—"know ye not, that there is a prince, and a great man, fallen, this day, in Israel?" "We bury, in his honored tomb," the Union says—the journal of our land, which, more than any other, must be regarded as the antagonist of his administration—"we bury, in his honored tomb, every unkind or unworthy feeling, which we might ever have entertained. General Taylor rises before us, in all the glory of the Hero, in all the majesty of the Patriot ; whose name is associated with some of the most brilliant achievements in our annals, who has carried the fame of his country, to the remotest nations, and whose reputation will never die. The name of the Hero of Palo Alto, and Buena Vista, will live, as long as the name of the nation, whose standard, he so often bore to victory, and glory. These deeds are indelibly written, on the tablet of a nation's gratitude." This is the true outspeaking of the heart, when its deep pulses have been deeply touched. Such is the moral conquest of a man : wide as humanity, in its extent. Such is the triumph, which a great man ; great, in doing, or in suffering, can achieve : beyond the lustre of all arms, beyond the splendour of all arts. Such is the true and real glory, of the princes, among men : not, in ancestral line ; not, in "the boast of heraldry, or pomp of

power ;” not in the range of territorial empire, or in the multitude of people, or of nations, which they sway : but, that they rule in hearts ; that they are felt, as princes, among freemen ; that they possess an empire, which no gold could purchase, and no power compel ; the empire of the free, unbought, unforced, affections : and, that, when they have passed from power, and passed from life, and all that there is of them, is so much dust, men, that could know no fear, men, that would never flatter, will stand up, by the crumbling handful, that is left ; and mourn, as David mourned, for Abner ; and weep, as David wept ; and say, as David said, before the world, and challenge all the world, for the denial : “ Know ye not, that there is a prince, and a great man, fallen, this day, in Israel ? ”

And he is gone. And we are left. Left with our duties, among men. Left with our responsibilities, to God. Left, with our invaluable trust, as patriots. Left, with our immortal interests, and our inevitable obligations, as Christians. This is no place for flattery. This is no place, to come, to praise a man. This is no place, for the mere eulogy, even, of the honoured and lamented dead. And, could *we* forget the place, if *he* could speak, from out his cerements, in the plain, and simple sense, which made him such a man, and so became him, as a great man, he would bid us cease, from him, and turn, in Christian humility, Christian dependence, Christian confidence, and Christian devotion, to the trusts and duties, which he lived and died, to serve ; and, which still lie, on us, enhanced, by the example of his life, and increased, by the bereavement of his death.

Humanly regarded, the death of General Taylor is, to this republic, an incalculable loss. To our imperfect vision,

man of indomitable firmness, has a special worth, and adaptation. The people take to such a man. They call him, "Rough and Ready." They rally round him. They grow into him. They grow together, in growing into him. He binds them all, in one: and is, what laws might fail to be, and fleets and armies could not be, the bond of an imperishable union. There was another thing, in General Taylor. He was no party man. He would not be, to be the President. When he became the President, he would not be, to magnify his office, or to keep it. It was a noble trait, in his great character, that he disappointed the party men, that helped to put him into power. He knew the people, and he knew the nation. But he knew no set, among the one; no faction, of the other. This was an element of strength, that was to grow: and that, more rapidly, with time. And there was one thing more, in him. We cannot shut our eyes, to the inevitable fact, that the great magnet of our nation has opposing poles: or seems to have. It was the peculiar fitness of General Taylor, for his responsible position, that he was of the one: and, yet, not against the other. The one could trust him: while the other need not fear him. It seemed, to human sight, the strong hold of the times. And, in a moment, like the house, which a child builds, of cards, it has been swept away, from us. May it not be, to teach us to "cease from man, whose breath is in his nostrils?" May it not be our lesson, for these times, that "God seeth, not as man seeth?" May it not be the way, which we "know not of," by which, God means to lead us? Has not the death of the Chief Magistrate taught us, as argument could never teach, that we are one people? Has it not touched the general heart, from East to West, from North

to South, as children's hearts are touched, when, by their side, a father falls? Could legislation, could judicial action, could commercial interests, could any thing, have shown so clearly, so feelingly, so instantaneously, so universally, that, divided, as we may be, or may think we are, we are but one, in heart? And, may there not proceed, from that new grave, in which the funeral rites of twenty millions garner up, to-day, the ashes of our patriot-soldier, an influence, which, knitting all our hearts together, as true brethren, of one blood, shall pervade our national councils, and control our national actions, and mould our national interests; and, with God to bless us, as the answer to our penitent and faithful prayers, set up this nation, in the eyes of all mankind, as the light and joy of all the lands: shedding, on all, the mild and genial radiance of free institutions; and spreading, among all, the blessings and the benefits of Christian Freedom; the freedom, which, can only dwell with truth and peace; the freedom of the freemen of the Lord! That it may be so, it becomes us to receive, with an unhesitating confidence, the distinguished Statesman, who sits, now, in General Taylor's seat. By the immediate act of God, he is the President of the United States. Receiving him, at God's hand, let us receive him, with a generous trust. Let us resolve, to give him our support; the support of our sympathy, the support of our confidence, the support of our co-operation, the support of our prayers. Let us commend him, and the counsellors, that are to share, with him, the cares and toils of State, to the favour, the guidance, the protection, of Almighty God. Let us renew our vows, to-day, to the admirable Constitution, which our Father's vindicated, for us, with their blood. Let us renew our vows, to-

day, to the glorious Union, which their blood cemented, sealed, and consecrated. On our knees, let us join hands, here, in God's house, upon God's day, with the great multitude of Christian Freemen, whom the day's solemnities have knit in one. On our knees, let us join hearts, with them, here, in God's house, upon God's day; and pour, from souls, which sorrow softens, and which grace subdues, the Christian Patriot's prayer, "that peace and happiness, truth and justice, religion and piety, may be established, among us, for all generations."

Nor, let us lose the lesson, which, as men, and sinners, this startling and afflictive providence is so well adapted to convey. How can we clasp our darlings, to our hearts, and not remember, how a moment may resolve them into dust, and leave us desolate! How can we lie down, on our beds, this night, and not remember, that the morning light may find us, garnished, for the grave. The prayer, which asks from God, for the bereaved of this day, the strength and comfort of His grace, will be the commendation of our darlings to the favor of His love. And, the deep penitence, which such a death should waken in our hearts, so sudden, so startling, so appalling, will bring us to the Cross, where none can perish, through the Lamb, Who died for all. To Whom, one with the Father, and the Holy Spirit, three Persons, and one only God, shall ever be ascribed, the glory and the praise.

Pastoral Letter,

TO THE CLERGY OF THE DIOCESE OF NEW JERSEY.

Dear and Reverend Brethren.—Regarding the death of President Taylor, as a great national calamity, and our whole nation as one afflicted family, I do not hesitate to request, that, on Sunday next, the seventh after Trinity, you will use the Prayer which follows, before the two final Prayers of Morning and Evening Service. We shall do well to humble ourselves, under the chastening hand of Almighty God; and to beseech Him, for His dear Son's sake, to pardon our manifold transgressions, and turn away His anger from us, lest we perish. If prosperity have hardened the national heart; if we have been tempted to forget God our Saviour: in whatever way we have offended Him, who holds the nations in His hands, this signal Providence should be improved by us, in that humility of spirit, and with that consecration of heart and life, which become us, as ransomed sinners, and with which, alone, we can come acceptably before Him, through the propitiation of the Cross. Upon our hearts, thus softened and subdued, He will send down the blessings, and the comforts of His grace, and restore to us, His pardoning and preserving love. Commending the bereaved household, of our late venerable Chief Magistrate, the honored successor to him, in the highest trust which men bestow, his associates, in the several departments of the government, and the whole appalled and mourning nation, to your faithful prayers, and to the mercy and favor of God, I am, affectionately, and faithfully, your brother and servant in Christ,

GEORGE W. DOANE,

Bishop of New Jersey.

Riverside, July 19, 1850.

PRAYER.

O Merciful God, and Heavenly Father, who hast taught us, in Thy holy Word, that thou dost not willing afflict or grieve the children of men; Look with pity, we beseech Thee, upon the sorrows of Thy servants. In Thy wisdom, thou hast seen fit to visit us with trouble, and to bring distress upon us. Remember us, O Lord, in mercy; sanctify Thy fatherly correction to us; endue our souls with patience under our affliction, and with resignation to Thy blessed will; comfort us with a sense of Thy goodness; lift up Thy countenance upon us, and give us peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*



